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CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES FOR A PROGRAM OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Adopted by
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF
THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES
OF CHRIST IN AMERICA

Atlanta, Georgia

December 6, 1949



THE churches of Christ in America, through efforts of missionary pioneers abroad and by missionary education at home, have stressed the spiritual and material needs of the peoples in underdeveloped regions. It is gratifying that greater recognition is now being given by government to the meeting of these needs. We rejoice in the unanimous support given by the Economic and Social Committee of the United Nations General Assembly to the principles of an extended program of technical assistance in the development of these regions. We urge our government to give this undertaking the major consideration and support called for in President Truman's Inaugural Address. We call upon our church people to devote prayerful attention and, when appropriate, vigorous action in the furtherance of this program.

The problems involved in the development of the less advanced areas of the world are complex and stubborn. The available resources of the more developed states are limited while the resources of the less developed states are difficult to marshal. The factors which hamper development such as agricultural backwardness, inadequate industry, dearth of communication facilities, poor sanitation, and illiteracy, must be attacked on many fronts, simultaneously. The correlation of national and international effort by democratic procedures is difficult to achieve. The solution of such problems will require clear vision, patient good will, and persistent cooperative action over several decades.

We support the basic principles of the United Nations' developing program of technical assistance. These principles generally conform to the concept of neighborliness cherished by Christians. They outline a practical plan whereby the nations may be united in constructive effort for the common welfare, thereby creating the fellowship which is essential to world community and durable peace. While the program envisaged cannot achieve permanent results quickly, progress towards the goal can serve as a major deterrent to the spread of dictatorship and lessen the threat to security. Like the constructive purposes of the European Recovery Program, the aims of the technical assistance program should stand at the forefront of the American bi-partisan foreign policy.

The churches of Christ have major contributions to make in the evolution of this program.

Missionary experts can give practical counsel on many aspects of technical assistance. Missionary projects in community reconstruction offer both inspiration for an enlarged development program and a warning against the idea that material development alone will meet the needs of the people. Our churches in many lands can help to guide and support the international development policies. We urge the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs to give major attention to the question of Christian global strategy in relation to the development of underdeveloped regions. We welcome the decision of the Federal Council's Department of International Justice and Goodwill, working in close collaboration with the Foreign Missions Conference, to establish a special committee on problems of the churches' relationship to the emerging technical assistance program.

We set forth in preliminary fashion, certain principles which seem to us important if the program is to achieve its potential benefits. We urge the Congress to give early and favorable consideration to legislation enabling our country to play a leading role in an expanded program of technical assistance in harmony with these principles.

1. The guidance of the technical assistance program, involving a wide variety of international, national, and private activities, should be carried on principally by the appropriate bodies of the United Nations and the specialized agencies in order to enlist the maximum contributions of all states able to help, to provide the most favorable circumstances for a correlated strategy, and to encourage the cooperation that builds community.
2. The focus of attention should be the genuine needs of the peoples in the underdeveloped regions, insofar as these are recognized in their own aspirations and are compatible with the requirements of world development, stability, and security.
3. The strategy should aim at an integrated plan which would utilize available technical and material resources in an organic approach to the development of densely populated regions, rather than a haphazard or piece-meal approach which would increase the pressure on the means of subsistence.
4. The policy should be conceived in terms of

long-range commitments in order that the peoples concerned may base their undertakings on mutual assurances of continued support.

5. The planning of projects should also take into account the need for early achievements which can serve to enlist the popular support required for a long-range program.
6. The preparation of experts for the program should include not merely competent technical training, but also understanding of and sympathy for the larger objectives of the program and for the peoples of the underdeveloped regions.
7. The training of native experts, and of leaders able to transmit information to the villages, should be in the forefront of the plans, that the development program may become a program of self-development as rapidly as possible.
8. The development program should encourage and undergird the voluntary participation of appropriate non-governmental agencies and institutions, in order that as many as possible of the creative resources of the free societies may be enlisted and that existing ties among the peoples may be strengthened.

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